BATTLEWORLD

MASTER OF KUNG FU

SECRET WARS

MARVEL

BLACKMAN
TALAJIC
SUDZUKA
MRVA

003

SECRET WARS

THE MULTIVERSE WAS DESTROYED!

NOW ALL THAT REMAINS...IS **BATTLEWORLD**: A MASSIVE, PATCHWORK PLANET COMPOSED OF THE FRAGMENTS OF WORLDS THAT NO LONGER EXIST, MAINTAINED BY THE IRON WILL OF ITS GOD AND MASTER, VICTOR VON DOOM!

EACH REGION IS A DOMAIN UNTO ITSELF!

WITH THE HELP OF A GROUP OF OUTCASTS FROM THE LOWER CASTE, THE DISGRACED SHANG-CHI ESCAPED EMPEROR ZHENG ZU'S MURDEROUS THUGS. KITTEN, THE OUTCASTS' LEADER, PUSHED SHANG-CHI TO TEACH THEM SELF-DEFENSE, BUT CALLISTO, UNSATISFIED WITH SHANG-CHI'S DISMISSIVE ATTITUDE, GAVE UP THEIR LOCATION TO EMPEROR ZU.

WITH THE EMPEROR'S FORCES AT THEIR DOORSTEP, AND THE BLOOD OF AN OUTCAST ON HIS HANDS, SHANG-CHI DECIDED THAT TO SAVE HIMSELF AND THE LOWEST CASTE, HE MUST DEFEAT ZHENG ZU AND SHOW HIMSELF TO BE...

MASTER OF KUNG FU

CHAPTER THREE: MASTERS ALL

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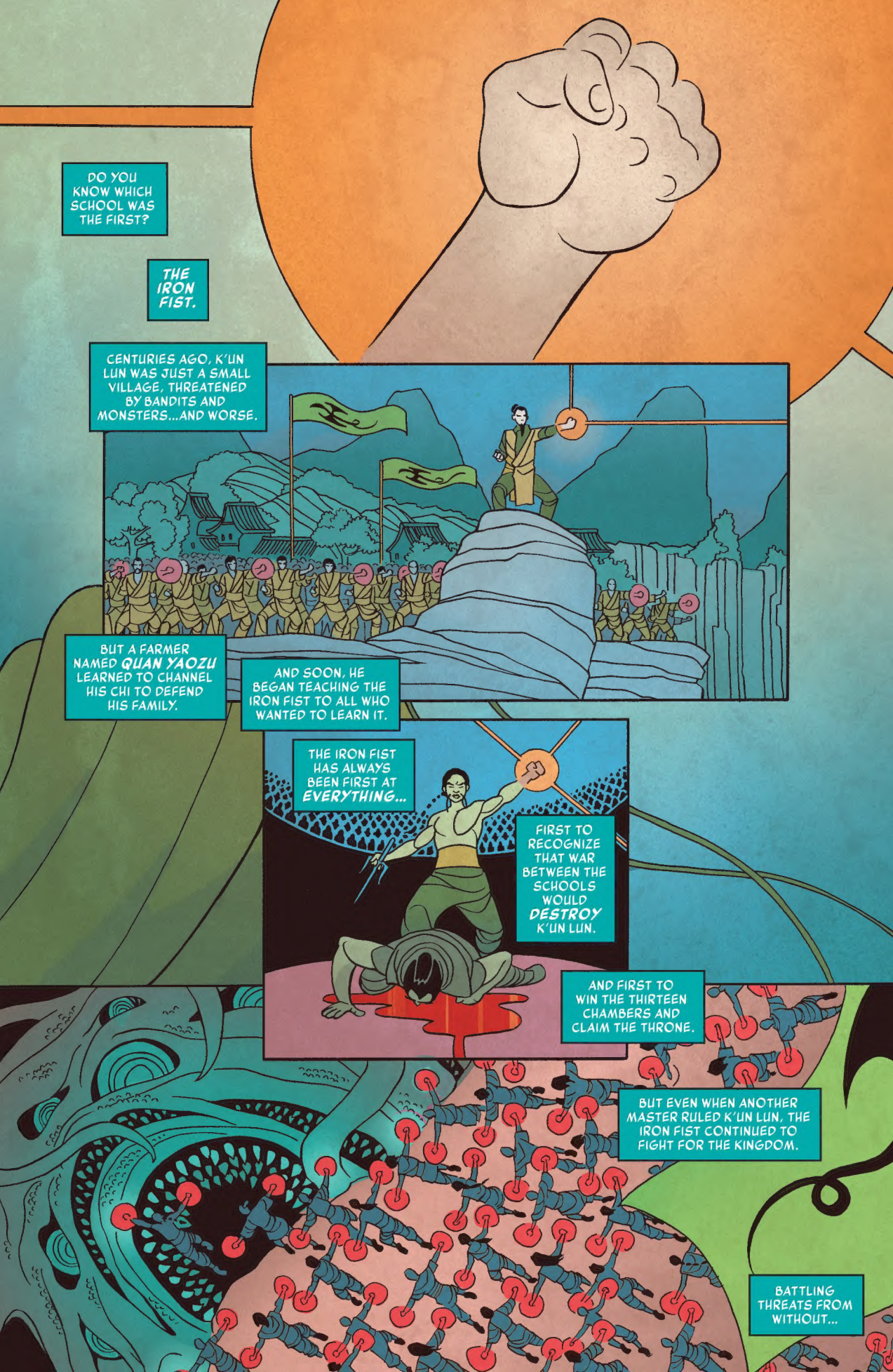

DO YOU KNOW WHICH SCHOOL WAS THE FIRST?
THE IRON FIST.
CENTURIES AGO, K'UN LUN WAS JUST A SMALL VILLAGE, THREATENED BY BANDITS AND MONSTERS...AND WORSE.
BUT A FARMER NAMED QUAN YAOZU LEARNED TO CHANNEL HIS CHI TO DEFEND HIS FAMILY.
AND SOON, HE BEGAN TEACHING THE IRON FIST TO ALL WHO WANTED TO LEARN IT.
THE IRON FIST HAS ALWAYS BEEN FIRST AT EVERYTHING...
FIRST TO RECOGNIZE THAT WAR BETWEEN THE SCHOOLS WOULD DESTROY K'UN LUN.
AND FIRST TO WIN THE THIRTEEN CHAMBERS AND CLAIM THE THRONE.
BUT EVEN WHEN ANOTHER MASTER RULED K'UN LUN, THE IRON FIST CONTINUED TO FIGHT FOR THE KINGDOM.
BATTLING THREATS FROM WITHOUT...

...AND WITHIN.

LORD TUAN, MOST REVERED OF ALL IRON FIST MASTERS, NEVER AGREED WITH EMPEROR ZU'S PERSECUTION OF THE MAGICAL RACES.

AND HE HATED THAT THE TEN RINGS KILLED FAILED STUDENTS.

SINCE THE DAYS OF YAOZU, THE IRON FIST HAS *PROTECTED* THE WEAK...

...SOMETHING I OFTEN FORGET.

SO, AGAIN AND AGAIN, LORD TUAN FACED ZHENG ZU IN THE THIRTEENTH CHAMBER.

AND EACH TIME, LORD TUAN ALMOST WON.

THOUGH HE NEVER TOOK THE THRONE FROM ZHENG ZU, HE DID SOMETHING FAR WORSE.

LORD TUAN *HUMILIATED* THE EMPEROR.

AND PROVED THAT EVEN THE IMMORTAL ZHENG ZU *BLEEDS* LIKE THE REST OF US.

SO, WHEN *YOUR* EMPEROR CLAIMS THAT HE KNOWS NOTHING OF LORD TUAN'S DEATH...

...PRETENDS THAT HE DID NOT SEND SHANG-CHI, HIS OWN SON, TO INFILTRATE THE IRON FIST TEMPLE...

...AND *MURDER* LORD TUAN...

...I KNOW IT IS A LIE.
IS THAT WHY YOU HAVE SUSPENDED THE SEARCH FOR SHANG-CHI? YOU NO LONGER HOLD HIM RESPONSIBLE?
NO... SHANG-CHI'S HANDS CHOKED THE LIFE OUT OF LORD TUAN. EVEN IF HIS FATHER GAVE THE ORDER, SHANG-CHI MUST STILL FACE JUSTICE.
BUT I CANNOT IGNORE MY OPPORTUNITY TO DEFEAT ZHENG ZU IN THE THIRTEEN CHAMBERS.
ONCE I AM EMPEROR...
...SHANG-CHI WILL HAVE NOWHERE TO HIDE.

IT IS TIME.
YES, EMPEROR ZU. THE PEOPLE HAVE ASSEMBLED, AND THE GREAT MASTERS HAVE ALL ARRIVED.
THEN OPEN THE DOORS...
LET THE PEOPLE BEHOLD THEIR EMPEROR.

MY CHILDREN! MY STUDENTS! MY KINGDOM!

TODAY, THE THIRTEEN CHAMBERS OPEN AGAIN!

TOMORROW, YOUR EMPEROR TAKES THE THRONE!

THE LEGENDS TELL US THAT THE RITUAL OF THE THIRTEEN CHAMBERS PROTECTS ALL OF K'UN LUN.

SO THAT OUR KINGDOM IS NEVER AGAIN TORN ASUNDER BY BLOODY CIVIL WAR BETWEEN OUR MANY HONORABLE SCHOOLS...

...ALL OF OUR GREAT MASTERS COMPETE FOR THE THRONE IN TRIAL BY COMBAT!

BUT GENERATIONS FROM NOW, WE WILL BECOME LEGEND.

WISE T'CHALLA OF THE PANTHER CLAN, STILL HUNTING FOR THE THIRTEENTH CHAMBER...

AND BRAVE AVA, FOLLOWING BEHIND HER BROTHER AS MASTER TO THE HOUSE OF THE JADE TIGER...

RESURFACING FROM THE HALLS OF ATLANTIS AFTER YEARS OF SELF-IMPOSED SECLUSION, SAVAGE LORD NAMOR.

MYSTERIOUS DREW, WEAVER OF THE SPIDER CULT...

FROM THE HOUSE OF TERRIGEN MISTS, HIDDEN IN THE WILDS OF ANCIENT K'UN LUN, UNYIELDING KARNAK.

AND NOBLE CREED, LEADER OF THE TOOTH AND CLAW.

SHATTERED SPECTOR, MERCURIAL MASTER OF THE FACES OF THE MOON...

FROM THE RED HAND, WHICH HAS EVER STOOD BY THE EMPEROR'S SIDE, LOYAL RED SAI...

AND THE MOST DEADLY LADY MANDARIN, MISTRESS OF THE SCHOOL OF SPIRIT BLADES...

AND, SEEKING TO AVENGE HIS DEAD MASTER'S MANY DEFEATS IN THE THIRTEEN CHAMBERS, SELF-DECLARED DEFENDER OF K'UN-LUN AND MASTER OF THE IRON FIST, RAND-K'AI...

ALL OF YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL TELL STORIES ABOUT THIS DAY...

THE DAY THAT ZHENG ZU OF THE TEN RINGS BECAME THE FIRST EMPEROR TO RULE K'UN LUN FOR ONE HUNDRED YEARS!

THERE IS ONE MORE SCHOOL THAT **WILL** COMPETE...

HE'LL WIN AGAIN, WON'T HE? ANOTHER THIRTEEN YEARS...

I HOPE SO. I GOT TWO MONTHS' WAGES ON IT.

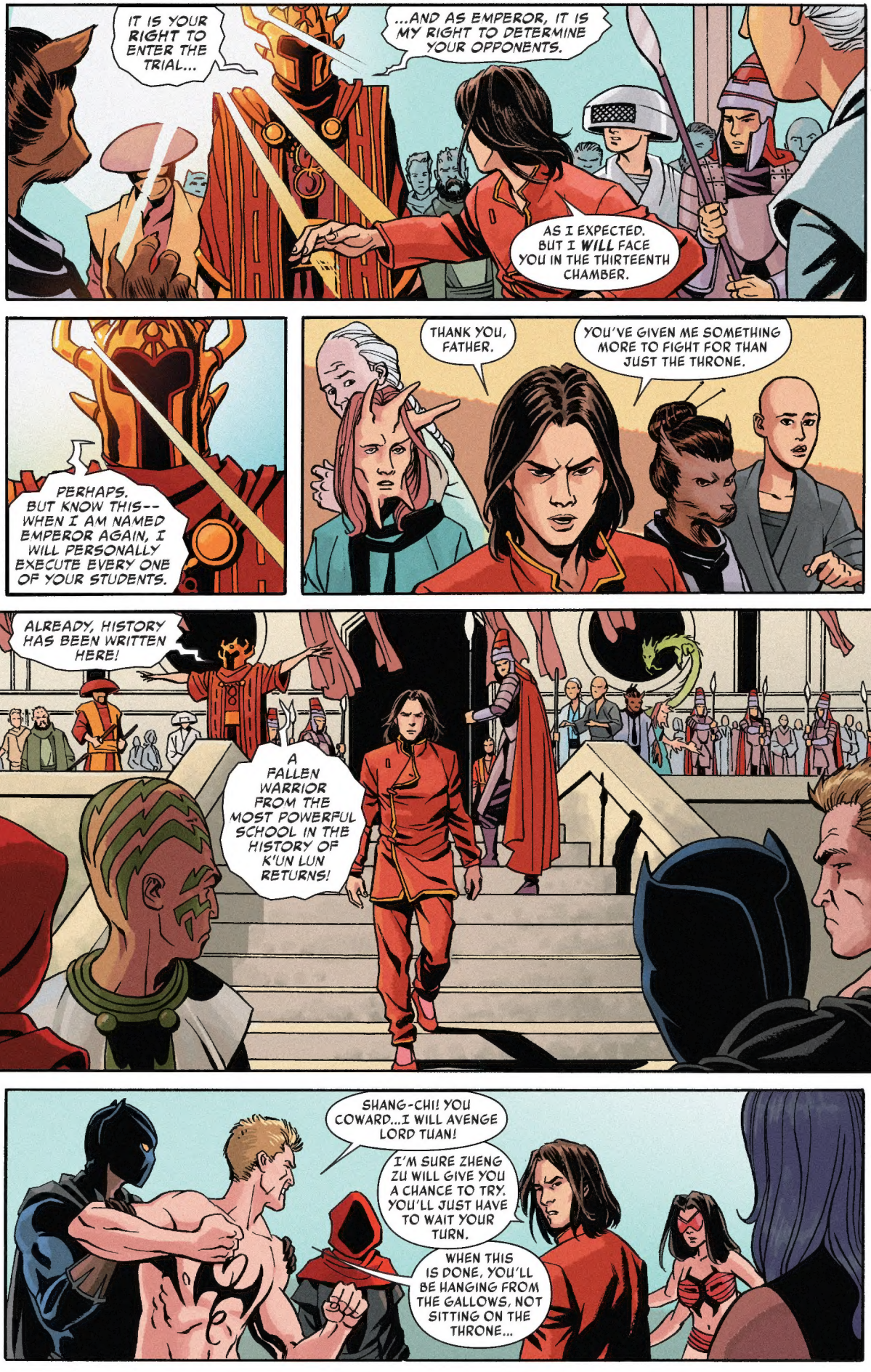
THE LOWEST CASTE.

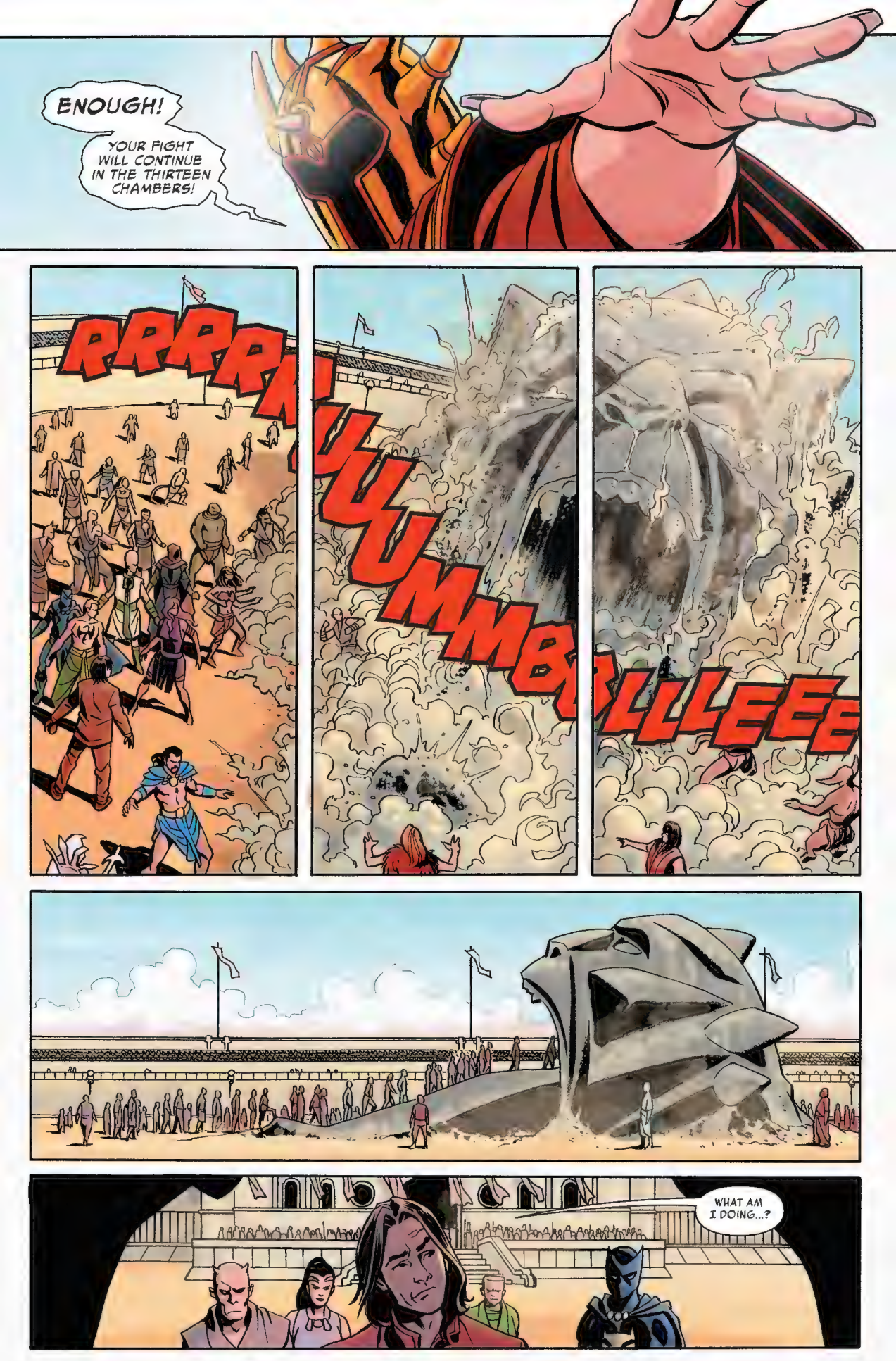
SHANG-CHI?

MASTER SHANG-CHI.
AND I DEMAND MY RIGHTFUL PLACE AMONG THE CHALLENGERS.

NO! HE IS A MURDERER! A CRIMINAL!

SO IS MY FATHER.
BUT IT DOES NOT MATTER. BY ANCIENT LAW, ANY MASTER IS ALLOWED TO COMPETE. HE NEEDS ONLY A SCHOOL AND STUDENTS. I HAVE BOTH.
WILL YOU HONOR THE ANCIENT TRADITION, EMPEROR ZU?
A WEEK'S WAGES THE EMPEROR HAS HIM EXECUTED RIGHT HERE...
DEAL.
HE CAN'T ALLOW THIS...
HE MUST. IF HE QUESTIONS TRADITION, THEN THE PEOPLE WILL AS WELL.
AND K'UN LUN'S DEVOTION TO TRADITION IS THE ONLY WAY ZU KEEPS THE THRONE.
YES...


IT IS YOUR RIGHT TO ENTER THE TRIAL...
...AND AS EMPEROR, IT IS MY RIGHT TO DETERMINE YOUR OPPONENTS.
AS I EXPECTED. BUT I WILL FACE YOU IN THE THIRTEENTH CHAMBER.
PERHAPS. BUT KNOW THIS-- WHEN I AM NAMED EMPEROR AGAIN, I WILL PERSONALLY EXECUTE EVERY ONE OF YOUR STUDENTS.
THANK YOU, FATHER.
YOU'VE GIVEN ME SOMETHING MORE TO FIGHT FOR THAN JUST THE THRONE.
ALREADY, HISTORY HAS BEEN WRITTEN HERE!
A FALLEN WARRIOR FROM THE MOST POWERFUL SCHOOL IN THE HISTORY OF K'UN LUN RETURNS!
SHANG-CHI! YOU COWARD...I WILL AVENGE LORD TUAN!
I'M SURE ZHENG ZU WILL GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO TRY. YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO WAIT YOUR TURN.
WHEN THIS IS DONE, YOU'LL BE HANGING FROM THE GALLOWS, NOT SITTING ON THE THRONE...


ENOUGH!
YOUR FIGHT WILL CONTINUE IN THE THIRTEEN CHAMBERS!
RRRRR
UUMMB
LLEE
WHAT AM I DOING...?

KITTEN... I KNOW YOU'RE HERE.

WHAT? HOW? DID YOU HEAR MY BREATHING?
NO. I AM YOUR MASTER. IT'S MY DUTY TO PREDICT WHAT FOOLISH RISKS YOU'LL TAKE NEXT.

ARE YOU GOING TO SEND ME AWAY?
I DON'T SEE THE POINT.
WE HAVEN'T YET FOUND A WAY TO REVERSE YOUR CONDITION, SO YOU CAN'T INTERFERE. AND THERE ARE NO RULES AGAINST OBSERVERS.
ESPECIALLY SINCE NONE OF THEM HAVE SURVIVED...

GOOD. BECAUSE I'M NOT SURE I COULD FIND MY WAY BACK OUT ALONE...
IT'S A MAZE DOWN HERE.

THE THIRTEEN CHAMBERS EXISTED LONG BEFORE K'UN LUN. NO ONE KNOWS WHO BUILT IT OR WHY, OR WHAT MAGIC MAKES IT WORK...
BUT ITS CHAMBERS ARE CONSTANTLY SHIFTING AND CHANGING, SO WE CAN'T PREDICT WHAT WILL COME NEXT...

EVIDENTLY WATER...
AND IT'S NOT STOPPING...
YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO FIGHT SOMEONE IN HERE, RIGHT?
YES. AND IF I KNOW MY FATHER, HE'LL PIT ME AGAINST A FORMIDABLE OPPONENT EARLY...SOMEONE WHO WILL BE UNDAUNTED BY THIS CHAMBER...
NAMOR!
NNNNF!
THOKK

YOU ARE OVERMATCHED, SON OF ZU!
I HAVE MASTERED EVERY TECHNIQUE TAUGHT IN THE HALLS OF ATLANTIS...
I CAN CHANNEL THE STRENGTH OF THE TIDE...
URGH!
AND HAVE TAUGHT MY LUNGS TO BREATHE WATER.
AND NOW I CHOKE THE LIFE FROM YOU, AS THE KRAKEN CRUSHES THE WHALE.

AAAIGH!
SHANG-CHI?
GASP!
WHAT DID YOU DO TO HIM?
HIS TRAINING HAS TAUGHT HIM HOW TO BREATHE UNDER WATER...
SOMETHING HE CANNOT DO WHEN BOTH LUNGS HAVE BEEN PUNCTURED.
THE MORTAL BLADE.
YES. IT WAS THE FIRST OF MY FATHER'S TECHNIQUES THAT I MASTERED.
EASY, LORD NAMOR.
WILL HE DIE?
NO. I WILL NEVER KILL ANOTHER GREAT MASTER.
THE THIRTEEN CHAMBERS WILL FERRY HIM TO SAFETY, AND THE HEALERS WILL TEND TO HIS WOUNDS.

BUT LET'S HURRY... NAMOR IS JUST AS *VENGEFUL* AS MY FATHER.

WHOM WILL YOU FACE NEXT?

CONSIDERING THAT MY FATHER IS STACKING THE ODDS AGAINST ME...

"...ALL OF THEM."

THE EMPEROR CALLS US A *CULT*...

ONCE I HAVE THE THRONE, HE'LL LEARN THAT WE ARE A *RELIGION*.

AAAIGH!

I SEE ALL MANNER OF WEAKNESS IN YOU...

YOUR LIVER AND KIDNEYS ARE SOAKED IN DRINK...

I WAS HOPING TO FACE RAND-K'AI FIRST...

BUT YOUR BLOOD WILL DO.

HAVE YOU EVER FELT THE EFFECTS OF THE SPIRIT BLADE?

IT DIGS UP THE PAIN OF EVERY INJURY, EVERY LOSS, EVERY HEARTBREAK YOU'VE EVER EXPERIENCED, AND BRINGS IT ALL BACK TO YOU.

ALL AT ONCE.

MY BROTHER RESPECTED YOU MORE THAN YOU KNOW...

IT WILL BE MY HONOR TO VANQUISH YOU IN HIS NAME.

NAAAUUGH!

THERE IS NO SHAME IN DEFEAT.

DON'T LIE TO HIM! THERE IS NOTHING *BUT* SHAME IN DEFEAT.

I HAVE FOUGHT IN THE THIRTEEN CHAMBERS MORE THAN ANY GREAT MASTER IN THE HISTORY OF OUR KINGDOM...

BECAUSE I DREAM OF A BETTER AND BRIGHTER K'UN LUN... A PLACE OF PROGRESS AND SCIENCE AND ART...

AND I WILL NOT LET THE MURDEROUS SON OF A CLOSED-MINDED *DESPOT* KEEP ME FROM THE THRONE!

NONE OF YOU UNDERSTAND...

I'M NOT FIGHTING BECAUSE I WANT TO RULE...

BUT BECAUSE I CAN'T ALLOW MY FATHER TO RULE ANY LONGER.

I DO NOT WANT MY FATHER'S THRONE...

BUT NO ONE ELSE CAN TAKE IT FROM HIM.

SHANG-CHI... ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
NO... WHATEVER I HAD LEFT, T'CHALLA TOOK FROM ME. KICKED ME SO HARD, I STILL CAN'T FOCUS...
AND KARNAK RUPTURED SOMETHING INSIDE ME...
THEN THIS WILL BE YOUR LAST FIGHT.
AND I WON'T PROMISE TO DEFEAT YOU QUICKLY.
TO BE CONTINUED

BLACK MANTA
EMPIRE
FINCH